

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

Letters of Marque from John Hancock

IN CONGRESS.

The DELEGATES of the UNITED COLONIES of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of New-Castle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia, TO All unto whom these Presents shall come, send GREETING: KNOW YE,

THAT we have granted, and by these Presents do grant Licence and Authority to *James Powell* — Mariner, Commander of the Schooner called *the Fishhawk* of the Burthen of *thirty* Tons, or thereabouts, belonging to *John Harrison* of *Northampton* in the Colony of *Virginia* mounting *four* Carriage Guns, and navigated by *thirty* Men, to fit out and set forth the said Schooner, in a warlike Manner, and by and with the said *thirty* Men, and the Crew thereof, by Force of Arms, to attack, seize, and take the Ships and other Vessels belonging to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain, or any of them, with their Tackle, Apparel, Furniture and Ladings, on the High Seas, or between high-water and low-water Marks, and to bring the same to some convenient Ports in the said Colonies, in Order that the Courts, which are or shall be there appointed to hear and determine Causes civil and maritime, may proceed in due Form to condemn the said Captures, if they be adjudged lawful Prize; the said *James Powell* having given Bond, with sufficient Sureties, that Nothing be done by the said *James Powell* or any of the Officers, Mariners or Company thereof contrary to, or inconsistent with the Usages and Customs of Nations, and the Instructions, a Copy of which is herewith delivered to him. And we will and require all our Officers whatsoever to give Succour and Assistance to the said *James Powell* in the Premises. This Commission shall continue in Force until the Congress shall issue Orders to the Contrary.

By Order of the Congress,

Dated at *Virginia October 24th 1776*

John Hancock PRESIDENT.